

I CLAIM AS MY INVENTION:

1. A holder for wide magnetic recording tape comprising:
four generally rectangular lateral walls;
an opening in at least one of said lateral walls allowing access to a central space
inside said lateral walls;
a first pair of tape hubs mounted between two opposite ones of said lateral walls
for rotation around respective rotational axes, said first pair of tape hubs
having a first magnetic recording tape thereon for winding and unwinding
in a transport direction between said first pair of tape hubs and spanning
said central space;
a second pair of tape hubs rotatably mounted between said opposite ones of
said lateral walls for rotation around respective rotational axes, said
second pair of tape hubs having a second magnetic recording tape
thereon for winding and unwinding in said transport direction between
said second pair of tape hubs and spanning said central space; and
the respective rotational axes of said first pair of tape hubs and the respective
rotational axes of said second pair of tape hubs all being parallel to each
other and perpendicular to said transport direction.

2. A holder as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tape hubs in said first pair of
tape hubs are rotatably mounted between said opposite ones of said lateral walls in
alternation with the tape hubs in said second pair of tape hubs, with one tape hub in
said first pair of tape hubs being disposed adjacent a first side of said central space and
one tape hub of said second pair of tape hubs being disposed adjacent a second side
of said central space, opposite said first side of said central space.

3. A holder as claimed in claim 1 wherein each of said first tape and said second tape has a width, measured perpendicular to said transport direction and parallel to said rotational axes of said first and second pairs of tape hubs, which is greater than approximately 24 mm.

4. A holder as claimed in claim 1 wherein each of said first tape and said second tape has a width, measured perpendicular to said transport direction and parallel to said rotational axes of said first and second pairs of tape hubs, which is a range between approximately 24 mm and approximately 127 mm.

5. A holder for magnetic recording tape comprising:

a first pair of tape hubs having a first magnetic recording tape wound thereon;
a second pair of tape hubs having a second magnetic recording tape wound thereon;

a holder assembly in which said first and second pairs of tape hubs are rotatably mounted, said holder assembly having a central space therein with each of said first and second magnetic recording tapes spanning said central space; and

said first and second magnetic recording tapes each being movable in a transport direction and having a width perpendicular to said transport direction of at least approximately 24 mm.

6. A holder as claimed in claim 5 wherein each of said first and second magnetic recording tapes has a width in a range between approximately 24 mm and 127 mm.

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7. A tape drive comprising:

a base plate;

four drive motors mounted to said base plate, each of said motors having a drive shaft projecting through said base plate, the respective drive shafts of said motors being parallel to each other;

a magnetic recording head; and

a positioning assembly, on which said recording head is mounted, disposed between a central two of said drive shafts, said head positioning assembly selectively positioning said recording head along a direction parallel to said drive shafts.

8. A tape drive as claimed in claim 7 wherein said recording head is a dual recording head having first and second read/write elements disposed 180° opposite each other.

9. A tape drive as claimed in claim 7 wherein said recording head is a single recording head, having one read/write element, wherein said head positioning assembly further comprises a rotatable support on which said read/write element is mounted and being rotatable to selectively position said read/write element at respective positions which are 180° opposite each other.

10. A tape drive as claimed in claim 7 wherein said head positioning assembly comprises:

a slide mounted to said base plate, a mount, to which said recording head is attached, slidable along said slide, and two lateral guides disposed on opposite sides of said mount to guide movement of said mount in said direction parallel to said drive shafts.

11. A tape drive as claimed in claim 7 wherein said drive shafts have respective rotational axes which, in combination, define a plane, and wherein said tape drive further comprises a first set of tape guides mounted to and projecting from said base plate parallel to said drive shafts and disposed above said plane, and a second pair of tape guides mounted to and projecting from said base plate parallel to said drive shafts below said plane.

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